

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATION**

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601**DECISION MEMO
ACTIONS OF A SPECIAL NATURE
AND
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

FCWD #1 Evergreen Water Storage Tank Renovation, Safety, Access Improvements
May 2021
Flathead County
Social/Economic Nature
48.23955, -114.29638; Township 29N Range 21W Section 32
Flathead County

PURPOSE AND NEED

The District's decommissioned steel tank is the primary focus of this project. The most cost-effective addition for storage is to refurbish this 1.0-million-gallon steel water tank, which was built in 1967 and decommissioned in 2011. The tank has lead-based paint on the interior and exterior and needs significant modifications to comply with OSHA.

The District must also repair the deteriorated roof coating on its 1.6-million-gallon concrete water tank, which currently is the only storage in the District's system. The concrete tank was put into service in 2011 and is needed to meet DEQ's storage requirements for current demand. The concrete tank is located immediately adjacent to the steel tank, which is currently out of service. Both tanks need SCADA upgrades for safe, secure, and reliable operation as well as mixers to eliminate stagnant water layers in the tanks and prevent ice formation.

A final element of the tank upgrades would be to purchase property adjacent to the current site to add security fencing and access to critical infrastructure. Both current and future tank renovations and routine operations require access to and use of this additional property.

Both tanks would be renovated at the same time, but the concrete tank will remain operational throughout the project for necessary system support. The steep pitch of the steel tank's roof makes OSHA modifications to allow access for inspections and maintenance very expensive. The tanks are in a residential neighborhood, necessitating limited noise levels and other accommodations to minimize the project's impact.

DEQ regulations require the District add storage to its system to meet current demand. The District has experienced growth in its service territory, which requires additional storage, but the primary purpose of this project is to correct a storage deficiency for existing customers that began in 2016 and has continued to date.

This project would provide all the storage required for current customers and would also provide additional capacity (approx. 37.5% of the renovated 1M gallon tank) to accommodate reasonable growth, which is allowed under the DWSRF criteria (page 14). That additional capacity for growth

would only provide ten years of 2% annual growth in the District, which is approximately one-half the 20-year useful life of the renovated tank.

The DWSRF criteria provide that funding is not available for projects that are “primarily for fire protection.” This project is NOT primarily for fire protection although DEQ regulations also require storage capacity for fire flows. The District can meet fire flows with its existing tank but cannot meet all the non-fire flow current customer demands at the level required by DEQ without adding more storage capacity.

The SCADA, Property Acquisition, Security additions, and Mixers will be added after all the renovations are complete. These elements will bring the tank operations and tank site into full compliance with DEQ and Homeland Security requirements.

Explanation of the decision(s) that must be made regarding the proposed action (i.e. approve grant or loan and provide funding):

DNRC will approve the grant to provide funding for the FCWD #1 Evergreen Water Storage Tank Renovation, Safety, Access Improvements Project.

DNRC is not required to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for actions that qualify for a CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (ARM 36.17.614) or justified by a PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW; or are ACTIONS OF A SPECIAL NATURE (ARM 36.2.523(5)); or are EMERGENCIES (ARM 36.2.539). These actions are subject to review for EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES that would require an EA or an EIS.

ACTIONS OF SPECIAL NATURE (ARM 36.2.523)

- ☐ Administrative actions: routine, clerical or similar functions of a department, including but not limited to administrative procurement, contracts for consulting services, and personnel actions.
- ☐ Minor repairs, operations, or maintenance of existing equipment or facilities.
- ☐ Investigation and enforcement: data collection, inspection of facilities or enforcement of environmental standards.
- ☐ Ministerial actions: actions in which the agency exercises no discretion, but rather acts upon a given state of facts in a prescribed manner.
- ☒ Actions that are primarily social or economic in nature and that do not otherwise affect the human environment.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION/PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW

- ☒ Categorical Exclusion (CE) refers to a type of action which does not individually, collectively, or cumulatively require an EA or EIS, as determined by rulemaking or programmatic review adopted by the agency, unless extraordinary circumstances, as defined by rulemaking or programmatic review, occur. This project qualifies under ARM 36.17.614 CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS.

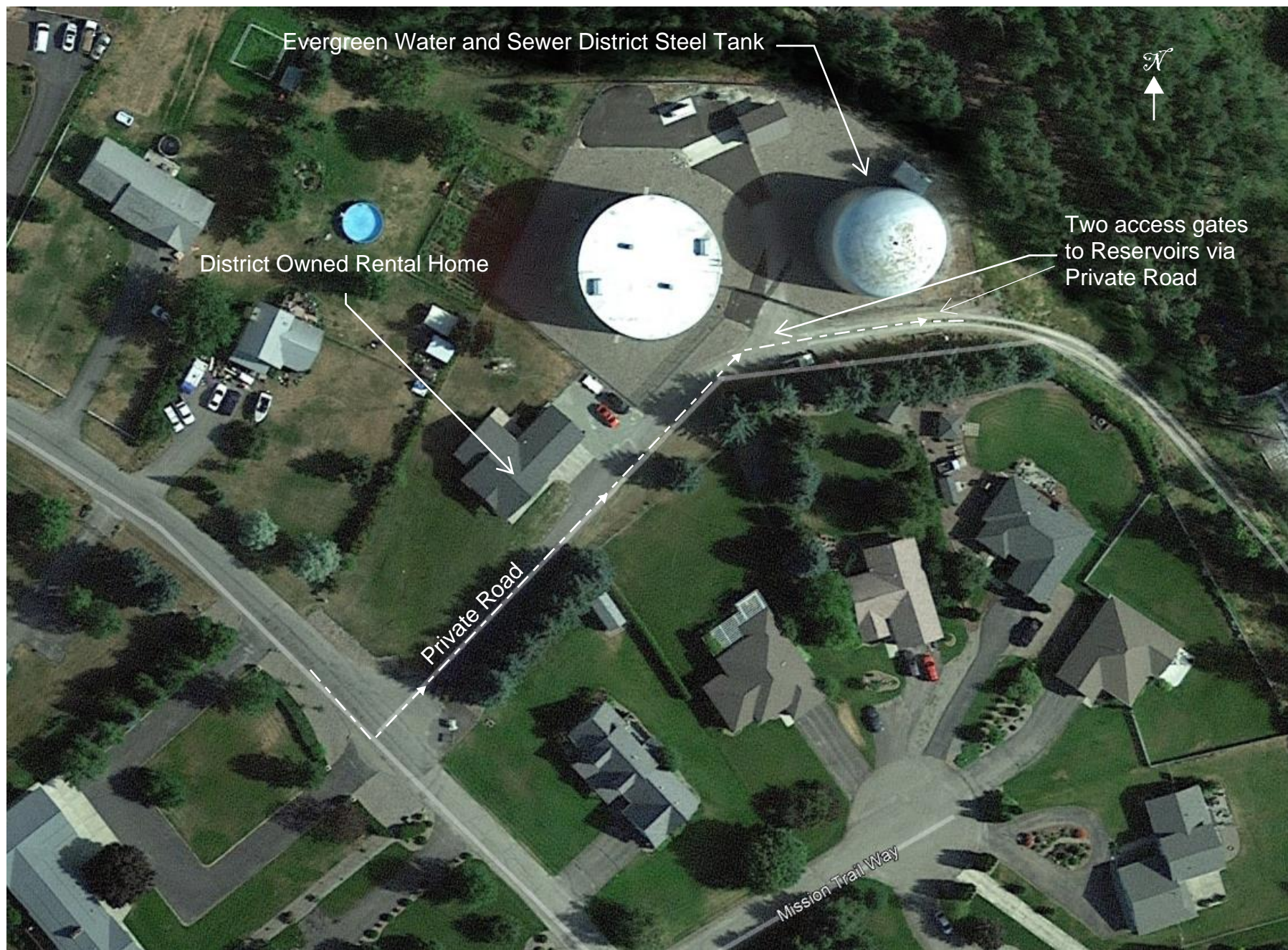
☐Programmatic review means an analysis (EIS or EA) of the impacts on the quality of the human environment of related actions, programs, or policies. DNRC – CARDD does not have any programmatic reviews completed at the time of this template.

The project listed above meets the definition of Actions of a Special Nature, Categorical Exclusion or Programmatic Review including specified conditions and Extraordinary Circumstances. Included below is a supplemental checklist verifying the use of the Categorical Exclusion.

Prepared By:	Name:	Demitra Blythe	Date: 12/30/2021
	Title:	CARDD MEPA/NEPA Coordinator	
	Email:	Demitra.Blythe	

Approved By:	Name:	Mark Bostrom
	Title:	CARDD Administrator
Signature:	Date: 1/5/2022 10:26:11 AM MST	

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Mark W Bostrom
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DNRC CARDD DOCUMENTATION OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION CHECKLIST

Project Name: FCWD #1 Evergreen Water Storage Tank Renovation, Safety, Access Improvements

Brief Description: Refurbish a decommissioned 1.0-million-gallon steel water tank and repair the deteriorated roof coating on the FCWD 1.6-million-gallon concrete water tank.

Agreement Number: AM-22-0026

Date: 12/30/2021

Preparer: Demi Blythe – CARD Division MEPA/NEPA Coordinator

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation action under 36.17.614, is excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) if the application for department review is for any of the following projects:

(a) Projects relating to existing infrastructure systems such as sewer and septic systems, drinking water supply systems, and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems, dams, culverts, headgates, canal lining, siphons, pipelines, pump sites, lift stations, irrigation infrastructure, that involve:
[Answer yes or no. If all answers “no”, an EA or EIS must be completed. If any answer is yes, skip to (b).]

1. Yes - Minor upgrading; or
2. Yes - Minor expansion of system capacity; or
3. Yes - Rehabilitation (including functional replacement) of the existing system and system components; or
4. No - Construction of new minor ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property as existing facilities; or
5. No - Projects in unsewered communities involving the replacement of existing on-site systems, provided that the new on-site systems do not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharges or in loadings of pollutants from existing sources, and do not relocate existing discharges; or
6. No - Use of sampling and monitoring wells to test for the presence of contaminants such as, but not limited to, metals and petroleum; or
7. No - Activities that do not involve or lead directly to construction, such as planning studies, scientific research and analysis, surveys, or engineering.

(b) A categorical exclusion may NOT be granted for a department action if:
[Answer yes or no. If all answers “no”, skip to (c). If any answer is yes, an EA or EIS must be completed.]

1. No - The action would authorize facilities that will provide a new discharge or relocate an existing discharge to ground or surface waters;
2. No - The action would result in an increase above permit levels established for the facility under the Montana pollutant discharge elimination system or Montana ground water pollution control system for either volume of discharge or loading rate of pollutants to receiving waters;
3. No - The action would authorize facilities that will provide capacity to serve a population at least 30% greater than the existing population;
4. No - The action is not supported by the state, or other regional growth plan or strategy;
5. No - The action directly or indirectly involves or relates to upgrading or extending infrastructure systems primarily for the purposes of future development;
6. No - The department has received information indicating that public controversy exists over the project's potential effects on the quality of the human environment;
7. No - The department determines that the proposed project that is the subject of the state action shows some potential for causing a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, based on ARM 36.2.524, or might possibly affect:
 - (i) sensitive environmental or cultural resource areas; or
 - (ii) endangered or threatened species and their critical habitats.

(c) If the proposed project meets the conditions above in determining use of a CATEX, the

reviewer will then complete items below as follows:

[Once all steps are complete, reviewer shall sign and date at bottom. If revocation becomes necessary, reviewer shall initiate an EA or EIS as appropriate.]

1. Yes - Project meets the above Categorical Exclusion criteria.
2. Yes - DNRC determination of Categorical Exclusion.
3. Yes - DNRC distributes the Notice of Determination.
4. Yes - Notice of Publication and cover letter (containing revocation language below) is delivered to recipient.
5. No - Notice of Publication published in local newspaper by recipient and evidence of publication provided to reviewer.

(d) The department may revoke a categorical exclusion if:

[Only complete the steps below if revocation of a previously implemented CATEX becomes necessary.]

1. Choose an item. - The project is not initiated within the time period specified in the facility plan, or a new or modified application is submitted;
2. Choose an item. - The proposed action no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion because of changes in the proposed action;
3. Choose an item. - New evidence demonstrates that serious local or environmental issues exist; or
4. Choose an item. - State, local, tribal, or federal laws may be violated.

Demi Blythe

DNRC CARD Division STATE PREPARER

Mark Bostrom - Administrator

DocuSigned by:

Mark W Bostrom

DNRC CARD Division STATE REVIEWER

12/30/2021

COMPLETION DATE